

## 42. ACCENTOR FULVESCENS.

*Tharrhaleus fulvescens* (Severtz.); Oates, Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds, ii. p. 171; Sharpe, Sci. Result. Yark. Miss., Aves, p. 98.

a. ♂ adult. Khamba Jong, 15,200 feet, Aug. 1904.

b. ♂ adult. " " Sept. 3, 1903.

Nos. 1723, 132, 150. ♂ adult; 140. ♀ adult. Khamba Jong, 15,200 feet, Oct. 5-9, 1903.

Nos. 1777, 1778. ♂ adult. Khamba Jong, 15,200 feet, Nov. 14, 1903.

No. 1922. ♀ adult. Gyantse, 12,000 feet, April 23, 1904.

No. 1958. ♂ adult. Gyantse, 12,000 feet, May 3, 1904.

There is much variation in the colour of the under parts in the series of skins in the National Collection; some are almost white, and others of all shades up to deep rufous. The palest variety occurs in the desert regions of Northern Tibet, while those from Southern Tibet and Sikkim, including my own specimens, belong to the darkest form.

This bird is very similar in its habits to *A. rubeculoides*, but appears to be less hardy. There were none at Tuna during the winter, when the other species was common. It was breeding at Gyantse in June, nesting in low willow trees. The Tibetan name is "Rib-che-ta-ta," *i. e.* Striped Hill-bird.

[To be continued.]

V.—Notes on the Nidification of Indian Birds not mentioned in Hume's 'Nests and Eggs.'—Part I. By E. C. STUART BAKER, F.Z.S.

IN 'The Ibis' for 1895 (pp. 41, 217) and 1896 (p. 318), and in 'The Asian' of 1893 and 1894, I published notes on the breeding of sixty-nine birds not mentioned in the second edition of Hume's 'Nests and Eggs,' edited by E. W. Oates. These were the result of my own observations only, but since then a great many more nests and eggs have been discovered—a few by myself and my co-worker, Dr. H. N. Coltart, and

many others by observers in Kashmir, notably by Colonel Rattray and Colonel A. E. Ward, by B. B. Osmaston in the Thun Valley, by Butler in the Andamans, by Davidson in Kanara, by Harrington in Burmah, by Bourdillon in Travancore, and by others here and there throughout the Empire. My thanks are due to all these gentlemen for allowing me to incorporate their notes in this article and also, in some instances, for adding fresh matter to that already published.

The only references given are to the 'Fauna of British India, Birds,' by E. W. Oates and Blanford, and to the publications in which the original descriptions have appeared.

The abbreviations used are as follows:—

Bombay Natural History Society's Journal = B. N. H. S. J.

Blanford's 'Fauna of British India, Birds' = F. B. Ind.

The numbers are in continuation of my last article in 'The Ibis' (1896, p. 318).

#### DENDROCITTA FRONTALIS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 33; Stuart Baker, B. N. H. S. J. vii. p. 166; id. Ibis, 1893, p. 41.

The Black-browed Magpie breeds freely in Dibrugarh from the foot of the hills upwards; it commences laying its eggs as early as the end of March and continues as late as the middle of June. We find that in this (Lakhimpur) district, at an elevation of three or four hundred feet, birds breed in great numbers which are not found doing so elsewhere under three thousand feet. The climate is, of course, very cool and the nearness of the snow-line keeps birds much lower than where it is further off.

#### 70. CYPHIRHINA CUCULLATA.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 35; Harrington, B. N. H. S. J. xvi. p. 168.

I can find no record of the breeding of the Hooded Racket-tailed Magpie, but Captain H. H. Harrington has been so good as to send me eggs, together with a brief note, from which it would appear that its nidification does not differ from that of *C. varians*.

Captain Harrington writes: "I was unfortunately laid up

when the birds were breeding, but had marked down a bit of jungle in which they were plentiful, and the head man of an adjacent village was sent out to collect the eggs for me (I gave him a skin and also the Burman name for the bird). The men sent in two nests with the branches complete and some eggs.

"The nests were very neatly made in some thorny tree with a thorny foundation, and the sides extended slightly beyond the lips of the nests proper: very like miniature nests of *Pica rustica* inverted. The interior was very like a flimsy Bulbul's. There can be no doubt as to the eggs, which are unlike any others that I have found in the district and which have a distinctly Corvine look about them."

The two eggs sent to me by Captain Harrington are typical small eggs of *Dendrocitta*, and the only eggs they could be other than those of *C. cucullata* are those of *C. varians*, which does not breed in the vicinity.

In shape they are broad obtuse ovals; of a pale dull green-grey ground-colour, profusely spotted and blotched with light brown, and with secondary underlying purple-grey markings. At the larger end these coalesce, forming a cap in one egg, but in the other not much more thickly grouped there than elsewhere. The texture is decidedly coarse and the shell very stout in proportion to the size of the eggs. There is hardly any gloss.

The two eggs measure  $\cdot 87''$  by  $\cdot 66''$  and  $\cdot 85''$  by  $\cdot 67''$ .

Both nests were taken in May, 1904.

In the Bombay Journal Captain Harrington describes his eggs as grey-stone in ground-colour with olive spots. His eggs are considerably larger than the pair sent to me, being about  $\cdot 95''$  by  $\cdot 7''$ .

An egg sent by Captain Harrington to Dr. Coltart agrees exactly with those sent to me.

#### 71. LOPHOPHANES DICHROUS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 59; Osmaston, B. N. H. S. J. ix. p. 192; id. *ibid.* xiii. p. 542.

Mr. Osmaston discovered this small Tit breeding in the

upper valley of the Tons River above Chakrata at an altitude of some 8000 feet.

He thus describes the nest :—"On May the 1st I saw a strange Tit come out of a small round hole in the dead branch of a wild cherry-tree. I shot the bird, which proved to be a Brown-crested Tit (*Lophophanes dichrous*), and investigated the hole, which was at a height of about ten feet from the ground. On breaking off the branch just below the cavity I discovered to my regret that the nest contained four freshly hatched young. It was placed at the bottom of the hole (about nine inches deep) and reminded me much of that of the European Crested Tit, the cavity having apparently been excavated by the birds themselves, as is often the case with the latter species. The materials were moss below, then a quantity of fine hair (probably rats') above, and a lining of the same material with the addition of a few *monal* feathers, apparently for ornamental purposes."

In 1900 Mr. Osmaston obtained a nest in the same valley, but higher up, at 9300 feet, containing five eggs. These he describes as being "white, spotted and blotched fairly thickly all over with chestnut markings." The nest was of the same description as that previously described.

## 72. PARADOXORNIS GUTTATICOLLIS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 52; Stuart Baker, B. N. H. S. J. xiii. p. 400; Harrington, *ibid.* xiv. p. 596.

I found this bird breeding in North Cachar, but it was extremely rare and I only took about four nests. In that district I never met with it below 2000 feet and it bred between 3000 and 4000 feet.

The nests are deep cups, measuring about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in depth and the same in diameter. They are very typical of the sub-family, being made almost entirely of the bright yellow bark of a kind of grass and lined with yellowish strips of grasses and bamboo-leaves, so that, as a whole, they appear bright yellow. Rarely I have seen them lined with very fine dark-coloured grasses: though the first I ever saw, taken at Gungong on the 27th of April, 1895, was lined thus. They

were very neat and compact, as are all those of the *Paradoxornithinae*. In Lakhimpur Dr. Coltart and I have obtained three nests from the foot-hills beyond Margherita.

As a rule, the nests appear to be placed from three to six feet above the ground in a clump of bamboos, but now and then they are in a straggling shrub or a tall stout weed. Little attempt seems to be made at concealment, and those I have seen *in situ* were conspicuous at some distance; attention was drawn to them by the fussy behaviour of the parent birds, who swear loudly when the intruder approaches, before they finally go off bleating into the jungle round about.

The eggs appear to be either two or three in number, so far as my experience goes, but it may be also that, like their nearest relations, they sometimes lay four. I have seen two- and three-egg clutches hard-set.

The first pair of eggs obtained were of a dead, glossless white, sparsely speckled with tiny dots of light brown and subordinate markings of a pale neutral tint.

A pair taken on April 2nd, 1898, also hard-set, were exactly similar, but had no secondary spots.

A third and fourth clutch taken this year, 1904, in April, at Guilang, North Cachar, are quite different: in both of these clutches the ground-colour is pale clear green-grey. In one there are very numerous, but, for the greater part, very faint, blotches and smudges of sepia and brown, with underlying, yet more definite, spots of lavender. There are also a few scrawly lines of dark brown, very fine indeed, but as long as  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. The second clutch is similar, but all kinds of markings are much more numerous and decidedly darker, some of the smaller blotches and the centres of the others being of a dark umber-brown.

The shell is extremely fragile, though the texture is neither fine nor close. In shape the eggs are generally broad blunt ovals, a few are somewhat lengthened, but I have seen none pointed or narrow. They vary in length between '95'' and '81'' and in breadth between '65'' and '61'', the average of 13 eggs which I have recorded being '93'' by '63''.

Capt. Harrington took a nest of this Crow-Tit at Taunmygyi, Shan States, at 5000 feet. The three eggs agree in description with those taken by myself, but are very small, only  $\cdot 75''$  by  $\cdot 64''$ .

### 73. DRYONASTES CHINENSIS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 61; Harrington, B. N. H. S. J. xiv. p. 597.

Capt. Harrington has taken the nest of this bird in the Shan States. He thus records the discovery:—"At Ganguoi (5000 feet) on the 1st of May I found a nest of this bird placed in a small tree about nine feet up. I was unable to shoot the bird, as it sat for some time on the edge of the nest just above my head and then got away. The nest was exactly like that of the next species" (*D. sannio*): "three eggs, measuring  $1\cdot 04''$  by  $\cdot 79''$ , glossy white."

### 74. DRYONASTES NUCHALIS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 63; Coltart, B. N. H. S. J. xv. p. 609.

Ogle's Laughing-Thrush is found in fair numbers along the foot of the hills from Sadiya on the north of the Brahmaputra to the Naga Hills on the south bank. How high up it extends we do not know, but the Nagas say that it is not a bird of high altitudes. It is nowhere common, and, though for five years we have worked the district, Dr. Coltart and I have not succeeded in obtaining a dozen nests, and most of these have been brought in by Nagas living in villages at from 2000 to 2500 feet elevation. It appears to be a far less noisy and obtrusive bird than *D. ruficollis* and others of the genus, to be an even greater skulker, and to go in smaller parties.

The nest is a rather bulky structure, measuring externally from  $6''$  to  $7\cdot 5''$  in diameter by about  $4\frac{1}{2}''$  in depth and internally about  $4''$  by  $3''$  in depth. Almost any material is used for the body of the nest, such as bamboo-leaves, other dead leaves, grass, small twigs, and bents, and all these are bound together with tendrils, fern-roots, climbing plants, and pliant

stems of weeds. Moss seems to be seldom, if ever, used in its construction. It is fairly compactly put together, but the materials seem often to be much sodden and so rotten that they will hardly stand handling. The lining, which is scanty, is formed of fine grasses and fibres. The nest, so far as we know at present, is always placed in scrub-jungle, in some bush from two to four feet from the ground. It is usually well hidden, and the bush selected is generally thick and well covered with foliage.

The eggs seem to be either two or three in number, and more often the former than the latter.

They are in colour pale blue-green, like the palest type of eggs of *Garrulax moniliger* or *G. pectoralis*, a little darker on average than those of *Dryonastes ruficollis* or *D. sannio*. The texture is as in the latter: the shell equally hard, close, and smooth, but less glossy, though much more so than in eggs of the genus *Garrulax*. The shape is a very regular oval, a few eggs being rather lengthened and pointed.

Dr. Coltart's eggs and mine average 1.15'' by .83'' and vary in size between 1.08'' by .76'' and 1.24'' by .87''.

We have had eggs taken or brought to us in the last few days of March, in April, May, and early June.

I found a nest with young and another with two fresh eggs on the 8th of June, in some scrub-jungle just outside the Military Lines at Sadiya.

#### DRYONASTES SANNIO.

Eggs of this species sent to me by Captain Harrington from the Shan States are quite as glossy as some that I have of *D. ruficollis*, and more so than any of my eggs of *D. sannio* taken in North Cachar.

#### 75. GARRULAX DELESSERTI.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 82; Davidson, B. N. H. S. J. xi. p. 655; Ferguson, *ibid.* xv. p. 257.

As regards the breeding of this bird we have two accounts which are rather conflicting. Mr. J. Davidson, writing

of certain birds in Kanara, says of the nest of this species :—

“I obtained a nest in the latter part of May. It was in a low-bush thick jungle, and was like an ordinary small Bulbul’s nest composed of rough creepers and roots, with a couple of skeleton leaves in the foundation. It contained a single partially incubated egg: this was pure white and glossy, and a very broad oval.” Mr. Ferguson, quoting Mr. Bourdillon, describes the eggs as “very glossy blue eggs, indistinguishable from those of *Crateropus griseus*.” The nest was a deep cup, composed of grass-roots and fine stems of grass, and was placed in a tuft of grass four feet from the ground.

#### 76. TROCHALOPTERUM AFFINE.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 89; Osmaston, B. N. H. S. J. xiv. p. 815.

I have a single egg of this species which was taken by Mr. B. B. Osmaston at Darjeeling, at an elevation of 11,500 feet, on the 10th of June, 1903. The colour is that of an ordinary Thrush’s egg, blue-green, and there are a few spots and specks of dark brown, mostly confined to a ring round the larger end. Some of the specks are so dark as to appear black when casually looked at. With the exception of a few very fine lines about a tenth of an inch or less in length, there are none of the scrawly lines so typical of the spotted eggs of *Trochalopteron*.

In shape the egg is a long oval, considerably smaller at one end than the other, and also more pointed than is usual in this subfamily. The texture is like that of the other spotted eggs of this genus—close and fine, but not very hard.

It measures 1·21" by ·82".

The nests are described by Mr. Osmaston as being “rather massive, but neat cups, about 8 inches in external diameter, and composed of moss, then twigs and dry grass-stems, lined copiously with the black rhizomorph of a fungus (these resembling black roots) mixed with some birch-bark paper.”

The three nests were all found at an elevation of over



11,000 feet on the Singalila Ridge between Sikkim and Nepal, and were placed in rhododendron and viburnum bushes from five to eight feet from the ground. Two eggs seem to be the full complement laid, and those of Mr. Osmaston averaged 1·15" by ·82".

77. ARGYA LONGIROSTRIS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 109.

This bird is such a skulker that it probably appears to be even more rare than it is ; so far, however, I have succeeded in taking only one nest and have had two others with single eggs brought to me.

The nest found by myself was a very deep cup, the internal depth exceeding the diameter by over an inch, the dimensions being internally about  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " deep by about 2·4" across : externally it was 4·2" deep by 3·2" across the top. It was placed about a foot from the ground in a low thorny bush growing in thatching-grass, my attention being drawn to it by the parent bird leaving it as I approached. The materials consisted of leaves, scraps of grass-blades, stems of plants, and a few twigs, the whole being bound together with fibres, roots of ferns, and long pliant weed-stems, and lined with fine dark grasses and fern-roots. The lining was neat, but the outer part of the nest was decidedly rough, especially where the materials were wound round the twigs which supported it. It contained three eggs, very hard-set, of the usual *Argya* and *Crateropus* type, *i. e.*, of a rather deeper blue than those of the Hedge-Sparrow, the texture being very fine and close and decidedly glossy. In shape they were broad ovals, very nearly elliptical, and measured ·88" by ·7", ·86" by ·69", and ·86" by 69".

Another nest brought to me with a single egg was much the same as the former and was taken in the same kind of situation. The egg was decidedly paler and less glossy and also rather larger, measuring ·91" by ·72". It was somewhat less elliptical, one end being decidedly smaller than the other. The third nest and the egg it contained were facsimiles in appearance of those first described, but the nest was said to

have been taken from a clump of aloes about two feet from the ground. It was wedged in amongst the bases of the leaves and quite hidden by the tufts of grass which grew round the plants.

The nests were taken on May 8th, 1901, May 18th, 1903, and June 4th, 1904. The eggs in the last case were quite fresh.

#### 78. POMATORHINUS NUCHALIS.

Harrington, B. N. H. S. J. xv. p. 519; Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 117.

The only record of this bird's breeding is that of Captain Harrington, *loc. cit.*:—"On the 6th of May, 1902, at Lorlem, S. Shan States, I found a Scimitar-Babbler's nest containing three eggs. The bird unfortunately escaped, and deserted the nest, not coming back the next day. On a subsequent visit to Lorlem I managed to shoot a *Pomatorhinus* within a quarter of a mile of the same spot. I forwarded the skin to E. C. Stuart Baker, who kindly identified it for me as *P. nuchalis*. As it is highly improbable that either *P. schisticeps* or *P. olivaceus* inhabit the same jungle, I think it is safe to record the nesting as that of *P. nuchalis*. The nest was cup-shaped, composed of grass- and leaf-stems, and placed in a bush about two feet from the ground. The eggs, three in number (incubated), were glossy white and measure about 1" by .72'."

All that can be said about these eggs is that they were probably those of *P. nuchalis*, but I have found *P. schisticeps*, *P. ferruginosus*, and others all breeding within a radius of a hundred yards, so that no actual certainty can exist about them.

#### 79. POMATORHINUS AUSTENI.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 123; Stuart Baker, B. N. H. S. J. xiii. p. 402.

I recorded in the journal cited above the first nest I ever took of this bird. It was composed of very coarse grass-stems, roots, and bents, lined with finer and darker-coloured materials of the same kind, and covered all over outside with a mass of dead yellow bamboo-leaves,

grass-blades, and few dead leaves of other kinds. The nest was rather more compact and better put together than is usual with those of Scimitar-Babblers, but it was very untidy, ending everywhere and anywhere, with no attempt to finish off. It was in shape a very deep cup, measuring externally about  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches in depth by about 6 inches in width near the base, whence it narrowed off towards the top, where it was about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Internally the cup was about 7 inches deep by about 4 inches in diameter.

The nest was built in mixed scrub- and tree-jungle, being placed at the foot of a bush among a quantity of fallen leaves and rubbish.

It contained five eggs of the usual Scimitar-Babbler type, pure white, of a fine silky texture, very smooth, but only slightly glossed and rather fragile for their size. These eggs average  $\cdot 92''$  by  $\cdot 68''$ . This nest was taken in the vicinity of Hungrum, on a peak about 6000 feet high, on the 26th of June, 1899.

Two other nests were found at later dates in North Cachar under much the same circumstances, but each contained three hard-set eggs.

In size the few eggs which have passed through my hands vary between  $\cdot 89''$  and  $\cdot 93''$  in length and between  $\cdot 65''$  and  $\cdot 69''$  in breadth.

#### 80. POMATORHINUS STENORHYNCHUS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 124; Stuart Baker, B. N. H. S. J. xiii. p. 401.

The Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler was extremely rare in North Cachar, and, with the exception of one which was shot, all my birds were caught on their nests, these being found on the lofty peaks about Hengmai, Hungrum, and Ninglo, all some 6000 feet in altitude. On the borders of Lakhimpur the Nagas procure them at a much lower height than this, probably about 4000 feet. They do not, however, so far as we know at present, ever actually come down into the plains even in the cold weather.

The nest is exactly like that of Austen's Scimitar-Babbler, though less well put together, and it stands little handling. It is placed either in scrub-jungle or in the small clump-bamboo which grows at great elevations on the outer hills of the Himalayas.

All the eggs that I have seen struck me at once as being very large in proportion to the size of the bird. The Rusty-checked and Austen's Babblers are of much the same size, yet the eggs of the former must be one-quarter as big again in bulk.

The first nest I obtained, on May 17th, 1895, contained three eggs, almost ready to be hatched, which measured 1·12'' by ·69'', 1·10'' by ·69'', and ·99'' by ·68''.

In texture &c. they are like other Scimitar-Babblers' eggs, and in shape they are long, but very obtuse, ovals.

Other eggs agree with these and measure between ·96'' and 1·13'' in length and between ·67'' and ·72'' in breadth.

The birds appear to lay in March, April, and May.

#### 81. POMATORHINUS HYPOLEUCUS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 125; Stuart Baker, B. N. H. S. J. xiii. p. 423.

This species, the giant of the genus, is a bird breeding, as a rule, at low levels, generally in the broken ground and low hills at the foot of the higher ranges, but sometimes on the plains themselves, and once I took its nest and captured the hen bird in a ravine near Guilang, North Cachar, at an altitude of nearly 4000 feet.

The nest is like that of all the other members of the genus, but more bulky, more untidy, and more loosely put together than the majority. It is, I think, also more exclusively made of bamboo-leaves, these being used for the central portion of the nest as well as for the outer part. It is either a very deep cup and semi-domed, or quite globular—generally the latter, and is placed on the ground either at the foot of some clump of bamboos or amongst cane-brakes. The latter are a very favourite haunt of the

bird and it was from such a spot that Mr. Charles Inglis procured me my first specimens. The bird is seldom seen, but its deep "hoot-hoot-hoot" may be heard in the early mornings and late evenings almost anywhere where these cane-brakes are plentiful.

Most of my eggs are broad, blunt ovals, but abnormal eggs are rather long and narrow, one pair in my collection being very narrow and quite sharply pointed at the larger end.

They range in size between 1·23'' by ·87'' and 1·12'' by ·74''. The average of 12 eggs is 1·20'' by ·83''.

#### GAMPSORHYNCHUS RUFULUS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 135 ; Stuart Baker, *Ibis*, 1895, p. 53 ; id. B. N. H. S. J. viii. p. 179.

The nest which I described in the 'Ibis' for 1895 must have been abnormal, as some that I have since seen were very different. On the 9th of August, 1898, I took a nest of this bird, containing four eggs, in the Laisung Valley, North Cachar, at an elevation of some 4000 feet. It was very flimsy and rough, made outwardly of dead leaves extremely carelessly fastened together with a few cobwebs, a scrap or two of moss, and one solitary twig. The thin lining was of fine grasses and the slender tendrils of a small convolvulus. Outwardly the nest was so untidy, with scraps sticking out in all directions, that it was not easy to measure, but, roughly speaking, it was about 7'' diameter one way and 5'' the other, the depth being about 2·8''. The measurements of the interior were 2·5'' by 2·8'' by 1·5'' in depth. It was built in the small fork of a straggling bush standing in dense evergreen-forest on the banks of the Laisung stream. It could be reached easily by the hand, and no particular attempt had been made to hide it. The birds, both of which seemed to be about the nest, slipped into the undergrowth I approached, but the female soon returned and was shot.

In general character the nest is much like that of some of the Shrikes, such as *Volvocivora*, *Graucalus*, and others, and

does not give the impression of being a Babbler's nest at all.

The eggs, on the other hand, are extremely like large, broad specimens of those of *Pellorneum mandellii* and *P. ruficeps*, or, again, like very brown, finely marked eggs of *Copsychus* and *Cittacincla*.

The four eggs from the above nest were in ground-colour very pale yellow stone, and the superior markings consisted of freckles, specks, and tiny blotches of reddish brown; these were scattered fairly numerous all over the egg, but more thickly towards the larger end, where, in two eggs, they formed a pretty distinct ring and in a third an indefinite cap. The secondary markings were of the same character and distribution, but pale lavender and purple-grey in colour. In one of the eggs of this clutch the secondary markings predominated, the primary being much sparser than they were in the others; consequently it had rather a grey appearance.

All four eggs were broad ovals, having one end not much smaller than the other, with a fine close grain and a distinct gloss. The shells were extremely fragile, as might be expected, for the young were just about to be hatched.

They measured '91'' by '67''.

Two other eggs brought in by Nagas from the hills beyond Margherita (Assam) were exactly like the others, except that the marks were more numerous and more equally distributed all over the surface. These were taken on the 14th of April and were quite fresh. They were fragile, though not nearly so delicate as the hard-set eggs first taken, and had a rather higher gloss.

They measured '90'' by '68'' and were shaped exactly like those already described.

Dr. Coltart has a fine clutch which are intermediate in density of coloration between the two in my collection. They are also on average rather larger.

Only fragments of nests were brought in with these last clutches, so that I can give no description, but, judging from their remains, they agreed better with the nest described in this article than with that formerly described in the 'Ibis.'

## 82. DRYMOCATAPHUS ASSAMENSIS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 147.

This little Babbler is fairly common along the foot of the hills in the Lakhimpur district, not coming far into the plains themselves but extending well into the mountains, up to at least 4000 feet, if the Nagas are to be believed. It is a great skulker and so is very little seen, and appears to be more rare than it really is; it is generally to be observed either on or near the ground in dense scrub-jungle, but does not seem to mind much where it is as long as the cover is thick enough. It shews a distinct partiality to places which are rather damp.

We have numbers of the nests brought in to us every year by Nagas, some of whom live several days' journey from the British territory, and Dr. Coltart and I have also seen a few *in situ*.

The nests are rather massive well put together constructions of leaves, bamboo-leaves, a little moss, a few fern fronds, and sun-grass, all more or less intermingled and wound round with fern-roots, soft fibres, and pliant weed-stems. The whole forms a very deep cup, the depth exceeding the width and the top being narrower than the base; in some cases it is domed or semi-domed, having an entrance to one side.

Roughly speaking, the nests vary between 6'' and 8'' in height and between 4'' and 5'' at the base, the top part being an inch or so narrower, while the materials are nearly always dark, the few bamboo-leaves used shewing pale yellow among the rest. They are placed either quite on the ground among the roots of some bush, in a clump of bamboos or between rocks, or else on some stump or dense tangle of creepers, vines, or ferns. In the latter case they are always very well concealed by the surrounding growth; in the former they assimilate so well with the surroundings that artificial means of concealment are but little required. The favourite resort seems to be some deep nullah with steep sides covered with thick vegetation, having a more or less rocky floor and some hill-stream or streamlet flowing along the bottom.

Either three or four seem to be the full complement of eggs laid, the former far more often than the latter, and two eggs much incubated may often be met with.

The eggs differ from those of *D. tickelli* only in being, on the whole, smaller and rather greener on average in the tone of their coloration.

The range of variation is extremely small and the following description of three clutches covers all the normal varieties.

1. Ground-colour a pale clear green, more decidedly green than the green-blue of a Thrush's egg and also rather paler. The markings consist of very numerous, but very faint, grey-brown freckles and tiny blotches distributed equally all over the egg. The general impression of colour conveyed by this clutch is pale sea-green.

2. In the next the ground-colour is the same, but the markings are rather bolder, decidedly darker and browner or less grey, so that the general effect is that of a brown-green egg, matched in this respect by some densely covered eggs of *Copsychus* and *Cittacincla*.

3. The third type is an exaggeration of the last. The ground-colour has, perhaps, more of a brown tint in it, or, I should say, it is less bright green than in either of the preceding, the markings are more numerous, more confluent, and more distinctly brown, and the impression given is that of a brown egg.

In one egg in my collection the markings consist in part of fine bold blotches with wide clear interspaces of the green ground-colour; they are principally confined to the larger end, but are fairly numerous throughout. In this egg, as in all the rest, secondary marks do not exist.

In shape the eggs vary as little as they do in coloration. Typically they are rather broad ovals but little compressed towards the smaller end, which is blunt. Abnormal eggs tend towards a rather pointed oval and sometimes to an elliptical shape, but either form is very rare, especially the former. I have seen no egg, out of, perhaps, a hundred which have passed through my hands, which could really be called pointed.



The texture is fine and close, but the extent of gloss varies greatly and seems to be most highly developed in the palest type of egg and least in the brownest, where in some cases it is practically absent. The shell is decidedly stout for so small an egg.

Eighty eggs in my collection and that of Dr. Coltart average in size  $\cdot78''$  by  $\cdot57''$ , and vary between  $\cdot75''$  and  $\cdot82''$  in length and between  $\cdot55''$  and  $\cdot61''$  in breadth.

The birds are early breeders, laying principally in the last few days of March, in April, and early May; but they continue to nest in June and July, and I have one clutch of eggs from Dr. Coltart taken on the 14th of August. It is possible, therefore, that this species has two broods in the year, though I do not think that such is often the case in the family Crateropodidæ.

### 83. THRINGORHINA OGLII.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 156.

This extremely rare Babbler was for a very great many years known only from the type-specimens obtained by Godwin-Austen near Sadiya in this district. In 1901, however, Dr. Coltart procured two specimens through a tribe of Nagas living some days' journey from our boundaries, where the mountains rise to a height of about 9000 feet. Since then we have yearly, by means of bribes and presents, induced the Nagas to hunt for them; but they must be very rare everywhere, for, in spite of all our offers, we can get but one or two birds each season. There are now two pairs in the Tring Museum, one pair in the Asiatic Museum, and besides these only those retained by Dr. Coltart and myself.

In 1902, on the 9th of May, Dr. Coltart had the nest of this bird brought in by some of his Naga collectors, together with one parent and four eggs. This he most generously made over to me. Since then we have had four other nests brought in, each time with one of the parent birds, and all of them agree well together, so that, although we have never seen the nest *in situ*, there is little chance of our having been deceived in the matter.

The nest, so far as we could gather from the remains brought in—one was in a fairly complete condition—and from what the Nagas tell us, is a very bulky affair, more like the nests of the *Pomatorhini* than those of any other birds, but it differs in having twigs, leaves, and a few other materials mixed with the grass and bamboo-leaves of which it is mainly composed. It appears to be globular in shape, having the entrance near the bottom on one side, and, according to the collectors, is placed on the ground.

The eggs could not, I think, be discriminated from small specimens of those of the Pomatorhine Babblers. They are pure white, very smooth and fine in texture, and decidedly fragile—more so, perhaps, than are Pomatorhine eggs of corresponding size. They have a faint gloss, rather more developed in some specimens than in others, but in none of them very highly.

My eggs are broad ovals in shape, three with the small end very little smaller than the other and very blunt, and the fourth with the small end rather compressed and pointed. They measure '91'' by '62'', '88'' by '65'', '86'' by '63'', and '83'' by '62''.

From what we know of the bird at present, it probably breeds in May and early June in the valleys of the higher mountains. Godwin-Austen seems to have discovered it on Manbhoun Tila, a mountain of some 10,000 feet in height on the north of the Brahmaputra; but from what we can learn it haunts the valleys between the lofty ranges, not ascending the mountains themselves, and probably seldom extending above 5000 feet. It is said to breed in forest ravines and to have a chucking call like that of the Laughing-Thrushes, but not to go about in flocks.

#### 84. RHOPCICHLA BOURDILLONI.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 161; Ferguson, B. N. H. S. J. xv. p. 260.

Mr. Ferguson, quoting Mr. T. F. Bourdillon, records:—"I once had the nest of this bird brought to me with the bird itself, and have since twice taken the nest myself. In the last

instance the nest was placed within two feet of the ground, and was a domed structure not unlike that of *Ochromela nigrorufa*, but, in addition to the exterior frame of woven *eorul* leaves, there was a lining of very fine roots. Both nests contained a couple of eggs, one pair being slightly incubated. The bird builds at rather high elevations, viz. from 2000 feet to the summit of the hills, and prefers the outskirts of the forests, unlike *A. phaeocephala*, which always builds far in. The breeding-season is from March to May. The eggs are white, sparingly spotted with purplish brown over most of the surface, but at the top the spots form a zone.

“Size 0·75'' by 0·52''.”

Mr. Bourdillon has kindly given me an egg of this species, which is now in my collection. It is of the same type as that of *R. atriceps* and agrees well with Mr. Bourdillon's description. The ground is white, but not very pure, and the markings consist of small blotches, freckles, and spots of light purplish brown, here and there with a reddish tinge in them. These markings are scattered all over the egg, but are more numerous at the larger end, especially so in the case of a zone. There are a few secondary marks of pale purple-grey.

The egg is a rather long, blunt oval, very little compressed towards the smaller end.

It measures ·76'' by ·52''.

#### 85. SCHÆNIPARUS RUFIGULARIS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 170.

The Red-throated Tit-Babbler is fairly common from the level of the plains, *i. e.* some 500–700 feet, up to about 3000 feet or perhaps higher, throughout the foot-hills of the Himalayas, north and south of Assam.

Throughout this range it appears to breed at all heights, but so far the nest has only been taken by Dr. Coltart and myself or our collectors.

The nest is like that of *Schæniparus mandellii* described by me on pp. 60–62 of ‘The Ibis’ for 1895. In shape it is a rather pointed oval, like an egg set up slanting on its larger

end, the entrance being just to one side of the top. It is composed principally of grass, much mixed with leaves, twigs (always small and pliant), weeds, and other similar materials. The lining is always of finer grasses, moss, and fern-roots, or a fine fibrous material made from the inner bark of trees, and forms a cup fairly distinct from the rest of the nest. It is stout and pretty well put together, the walls averaging over an inch thick, and the outer dimensions of the nest being about 4 inches broad by about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  to 6 inches high. It is placed, as a rule, actually on the ground, and the few examples that I have myself seen have all been in such a position with one exception. This was placed against a rotten stump, well covered with ferns, moss, and orchids, about two feet from the ground. It was in a garden and the tree-stump was standing practically alone, except for a single thick Croton bush just in front of it. It was, however, beautifully concealed and was only found accidentally by the owner of the garden in searching for a tennis-ball.

As a rule, the nest is built in scrub-jungle on the sides of nullahs and ravines; but I do not think that it is confined to any kind of jungle or position, though it requires good shelter, yet not too dense.

The eggs number three or four in a clutch, but the latter number is not found more often than, perhaps, once in five times, and sometimes two eggs are found incubated.

The eggs are distinctly like those of *Schanius mandellii*, so much so, indeed, that when Dr. Coltart first found a nest of this species, but failed to get the parent bird, I had not the slightest difficulty in naming them. Unlike the eggs of *S. mandellii*, however, which vary a good deal in coloration, those of *S. ruficularis* are remarkably constant, and the following three clutches taken from my own collection nearly cover the extremes of variation.

No. 1 is a typical clutch of three eggs, matched by four out of any five clutches taken. The ground-colour is pale yellow-stone with just the faintest imaginable tinge of green in it; the markings consist of clouds, blotches, and spots of pale

vandyke-brown, many of them looking as if half washed out. Above these are a few spots, specks, and scrawly lines of deep vandyke-brown, often surrounded by paler blotches, as if by a nimbus; under all these are a few blotches and a good many spots of pale lavender. As a rule, the markings are fairly numerous everywhere, but more so towards the larger end, not, however, forming anything like a ring or cap.

No. 2 is similar, but shews no green tinge, and the markings consist almost entirely of brown blotches, whilst the spots, specks, and lines are very few in proportion and the underlying grey markings quite subordinate, so that the whole egg gives a more dull brown impression than do the others. Even in this clutch of four, one egg is more like the first-described clutch than the other three, and looks as if it ought to have been laid by a different bird.

In No. 3 the ground-colour has the green tinge more strongly developed, the lines are entirely absent, and the dark brown spots are only two or three on each egg. The other markings consist of grey-brown or olive-brown freckles and small blotches, much mixed with the secondary grey blotches, so that the total effect of the egg is grey-green.

All my eggs are of the same shape, viz., rather broad ovals with well-defined, but obtuse, smaller ends. They may vary to a certain extent in comparative width, length, or compression of the smaller end, but I have seen no egg that I could call in any way abnormal.

One hundred eggs vary in size as follows: in length between  $\cdot 70''$  and  $\cdot 80''$  and in breadth between  $\cdot 51''$  and  $\cdot 57''$ , the average of the same number being  $\cdot 70''$  by  $\cdot 54''$ .

#### 86. RIMATOR MALACOPTILUS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 175; Stuart Baker, B. N. H. S. J. xiii. p. 404; de Nicéville, *ibid.* p. 531.

Two most conflicting accounts of this bird's nesting were published in the same number of the 'Bombay Natural History Journal,' one by Mr. de Nicéville (quoting Mr. Massou) and one by myself.

The former wrote :—"The nest contained three eggs, was of the same shape and size as that of *Rhipidura albicollis* (Vieill.), the White-throated Fantail Flycatcher, Blanford's No. 605, and was made entirely of fine grass without any lining; it was fixed in the fork of the branch of a shrub. The eggs were small, light blue, and without spots." According to this account, therefore, the nest and eggs are exactly like those of *Zosterops*, a bird about one-quarter to one-third the bulk of *Rimator*, which is a larger form than its nearest allies *Corythocichla* and *Turdinulus*. My description of the nest and eggs which had been brought to me by a Naga, together with one of the parents, was as follows :—"The nest is an ill-formed globe of dead leaves, grasses, a few old fern-fronds and bents, very loosely interwoven and lined with more dead leaves, the colour of all the material being of a dark or blackish brown. In height the nest is about  $8\frac{1}{2}$ "', while at its widest part, close to the base, it is about 6" across. The entrance, high up near the top, is about 2" in diameter."

The eggs were four in number and very hard-set, but just able to be blown. The ground-colour was very faint pinky white, the pink having a sienna tinge. The markings, rather profuse at the larger end, though sparse elsewhere, consisted of small points and blotches of reddish brown, mostly surrounded by a pale washed-out shade of the same, looking as if the colour had run. Here and there also were a few scrawly and entangled lines of very deep red-brown. The markings formed ill-defined caps or rings at the larger ends.

"In shape the eggs were very regular ovals, neither particularly long nor broad in proportion to their size. The surface was not very smooth, but had a very faint gloss, and the texture was fine and close.

"The nest was placed on the ground among the dead leaves and other rubbish at the foot of a large tree standing in a forest composed principally of small trees, and having a dense undergrowth of *Begonia*, bracken, and miscellaneous green bushes. It was taken on the 24th of June on a peak near Hungrum, at about 6000 feet elevation."

To this I can only add the size of the eggs, which

are: '84'' by '60'', '85'' by '61'', '82'' by '61'', and '81'' by '62''.

Mr. de Nicéville in forwarding Mr. Masson's letters authorized me to quote from them, and in one Mr. Masson wrote that he had watched the bird build the nest, had waited until the hen had laid three eggs, and had then shot the pair of birds and taken the nest and eggs. This is, of course, very strong evidence, far stronger than any that I can produce, mine being only to the effect that a Naga told me that he had caught the accompanying bird on the nest. I felt certain, however, and still do so, that no bird of the *Rimator* group would ever make the sort of nest Mr. Masson describes or could lay the eggs mentioned. His eggs were taken at Darjeeling at between 4000 and 6000 feet.

When at home in 1902 I found that the British Museum possessed a clutch of eggs said to be those of *Rimator*, which had been collected by Mr. Gammie at Darjeeling and corresponded with mine in size, coloration, and every other detail. Still, Mr. Masson, who is a keen oologist, is so absolutely certain of his identification that his description cannot be passed over in silence, though I have no doubt, personally, that he made a mistake either in the birds themselves or in the identification of the owners of the nest taken.

#### 87. *TURDINULUS ROBERTI*.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 176, iv. p. 480; Stuart Baker, B. N. H. S. J. xiii. p. 403.

Under the name of *Corythoichla squamata* I described as new (B. N. H. S. J. xiii. p. 403) a small Babbler with a pure white chin and throat having three well-defined lines of bold specks radiating from the chin. On the appearance of the fourth volume of Blanford's work, however, I saw that my bird was nothing but the true *Turdinulus roberti*, Blanford's description having been a compromise between that and *T. exsul*.

Roberts's Babbler is to be found in some numbers, though nowhere, I imagine, commonly, in the higher ranges bordering on the plains of Assam. The nest and eggs are exact counterparts of those of *Corythoichla striata* in everything

but size. I described at length the nidification of *Corythoichla* on p. 53 of 'The Ibis' for 1895, and it is unnecessary to add more here.

Three seems to be the ordinary number of eggs laid, though sometimes as many as four are found, and about equally often only two.

My eggs average  $\cdot 71''$  by  $\cdot 56''$ , and vary in length between  $\cdot 80''$  and  $\cdot 67''$  and in breadth between  $\cdot 53''$  and  $\cdot 58''$ . Abnormal eggs seem to tend towards a lengthened oval shape, considerably compressed towards the smaller end, which is always blunt.

#### 88. LARVIVORA BRUNNEA.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 182; Osmaston, B. N. H. S. J. xi. p. 71.

The description of the nidification of this bird, as given in Hume's 'Nests and Eggs' (vol. i. p. 127), is, as is now well known, erroneous. The eggs are, of course, pale blue, quite unspotted, and have been taken by Davidson, Rattray, Wilson, Buchanan, Ward, and many others in Cashmere and other parts of the Himalayas.

The nest is a cup, rather bulky for the size of the bird, and is generally placed on a bank or some sloping piece of ground, but often on the bank bordering a well-used footpath. The full complement of eggs is almost invariably four, and they are, as already mentioned, uniform pale blue, varying in shade from a rather deeper tint than that of a Hedge-Sparrow's to that of the palest laid by a Starling. The texture is very smooth and fine, but not particularly hard or close. There is generally a certain amount of gloss. In shape the eggs are a very regular oval, but little compressed towards the smaller end, and sometimes almost elliptical. My eggs and those which I have seen from other collectors vary in length between  $\cdot 7''$  and  $\cdot 78''$ , and in breadth between  $\cdot 55''$  and  $\cdot 6''$ . Osmaston's eggs are a good deal larger, averaging  $\cdot 80''$  by  $\cdot 60''$  and varying between  $\cdot 84''$  by  $\cdot 60''$  and  $\cdot 78''$  by  $58''$ .

This nest is a very favourite place for *Cuculus micropterus* to lay its eggs in.



89. *HODGSONIUS PHENICUROIDES.*

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 190; Osmaston, B. N. II. S. J. xi. p. 67.

Though I have never seen a nest of this bird, I have eggs in my collection taken by Davidson in Cashmere, where they have been also found by numerous other collectors. They are deep blue, considerably darker than any other blue eggs that I know, except those of *Garrulax albigularis*, and are without spots.

Osmaston gives the following description of the nests which he found. He says of the bird:—"It is very common in the Tons Valley at elevations of from 10,000 to 11,000 feet, but is rarely seen owing to its being of shy and retiring habits. I found twelve nests between June 5th and 11th, all of which contained either two or three eggs, mostly fresh, and three seems to be the normal complement. They were placed in low bushes from one to three feet from the ground in open scrub-forest. They were deeply cup-shaped, composed of brown grass without, and lined with finer grasses. The eggs are of a pure dark blue, about intermediate in shade between those of *Crateropus canorus* and *Garrulax albigularis*, and give the following measurements:—

"Largest egg ·89'' by ·63''; smallest egg ·80'' by ·58''.  
Average of 7 eggs ·85'' by ·61''."

My eggs agree well with these, but average larger, viz. ·91'' by ·6''. In shape they are long ovals, well compressed towards, and pointed at, the smaller end. The texture is very smooth, fine, and close, and there is a certain amount of gloss. The shell is medium, neither stout nor thin.

The internal colouring is paler than the external.

The birds breed from the beginning of June to the middle of July.

90. *OLIGURA CASTANEICORONATA.*

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 193; Osmaston, B. N. II. S. J. xv. p. 511.

The eggs of this little Short-wing have been taken both

by Mr. B. B. Osmaston and by Mr. Charles Inglis in Sikhim. They agree with Hodgson's figures and description, and Jerdon's supposed eggs of this species must have belonged to some other.

Hume's remark ('Nests and Eggs,' i. p. 132) that the eggs are "apparently something like a *Prinia's*" is most misleading, as no eggs could well be more unlike. Whereas the texture of the eggs in *Prinia* is hard, close-grained, and exceedingly glossy, that in *Oligura* is soft, not very close, and not highly, if at all, glossed. *Prinia's* red eggs incline to a decidedly spherical ovoid, whereas *Oligura* lays an egg which is a rather long oval, somewhat compressed towards the smaller end. In fact, the type of egg is just what we should expect that of *Tesia* to be. It is, however, much more richly coloured than the richest egg that I have ever taken of that bird. Two eggs in my collection, which I owe to the generosity of Mr. Charles Inglis, are in ground-colour beautiful pink-brick, and the markings consist of numerous darker brick-red specks and freckles forming a dense ring about the larger end, but gradually decreasing in number towards the smaller. Inside the ring the markings are very numerous.

My eggs measure  $\cdot71''$  by  $\cdot48''$ .

Mr. Osmaston describes his eggs as "Long ovals, with little gloss, of an almost uniform dark terracotta or dull chestnut colour, duller and less uniform than the eggs of a *Prinia*, and with a faint cap of mottlings of a darker shade at the larger end. "They measure  $\cdot73''$  by  $\cdot52''$ ."

The nest found by Mr. Osmaston was neatly but flimsily made of moss and lined with roots, having a few feathers inside. It was woven into and suspended from the small branch of a *Viburnum rubescens* bush and was about three feet from the ground. Other nests have been described to me as beautiful watch-pockets of moss lined with feathers and fixed in the pendent moss of steep bank-ledges; one was said to have been placed on the ground, hidden in deep moss.

## 91. STAPHIDIA RUFIGENIS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 206.

Hume's *Staphidia* appears to be the Western representative of this genus, and I doubt whether the locality, Daphla Hills, for *S. castaneiceps* is correct, the bird Godwin-Austen obtained there having been, more probably, of this species.

So far as we know at present, it is found at the foot of all the hills bordering the Lakhimpur district, both north and south, but we have not been able to ascertain to what height it ascends. It is of extreme rarity everywhere.

So far I have in five years seen but two nests *in situ*, of these one contained young birds and the other three eggs. The first was found in a tramway-cutting leading from the A. R. T. Railway to the Ledo Tea Estate, and the second in an abandoned roadway-cutting in North Lakhimpur.

The nest is very much like that of *Staphidia castaneiceps* and is made of the same silky, jute-like material as is used by that bird; and this, as I said when describing the nest, is probably the fibre from the inner bark of some tree. What it actually is I cannot say, though I have been at some pains to discover. The fabric is beautifully put together, the thick walls being very thoroughly woven and the circular shape of the inner cup always most carefully adhered to, however rough and distorted the outside may be made in order to fit the hole in which it is placed. Of the two that I have seen, one was placed in a rather large hole, and a considerable amount of other material, such as dead leaves, grass, twigs, &c., had been used to fill up the corners; in the second case, where the hole was only about four inches across by five deep, nothing but the fibrous stuff was used. In each case the inner cup was a hemisphere about 2'' by 1'' deep.

In one nest there was absolutely no attempt at concealment, the edge being level with the mouth of the hole, which was clear of jungle; in the other there was a growth of ferns hanging over the mouth of the hole which hid it fairly well from view. The nests obtained by Dr. Coltart agree well with mine.

The eggs of Hume's *Staphidia* and the Chestnut-headed

Staphidia are very much alike. I have two clutches in my collection, one of which I owe to Dr. Coltart; in this the ground-colour is hard China-white, with numerous specks, spots, and small blotches of dark vandyke-brown scattered all over the eggs, if anything rather less towards the smaller end. The secondary marks consist of blotches, some of them rather large, and specks and spots of dark lavender-grey, which are much darker than is usual with secondary spots, and also better defined. These eggs are very broad ovals, very little smaller at one end than the other. They measure  $\cdot 6''$  by  $\cdot 52''$ ,  $\cdot 6''$  by  $\cdot 52''$ , and  $\cdot 58''$  by  $\cdot 57''$ .

The other clutch of eggs differs considerably from these; the ground-colour is the same, but the markings consist of much smaller specks and spots of vandyke-brown, which are principally confined to a ring at the larger extremity and only sparsely scattered elsewhere. The secondary spots are far fewer and smaller and almost entirely confined to the ring.

In shape these eggs are different also, being much narrower ovals, more drawn out towards the smaller end, which is, however, very blunt. They measure  $\cdot 58''$  by  $\cdot 50''$ ,  $\cdot 58''$  by  $\cdot 50''$ , and  $\cdot 57''$  by  $\cdot 50''$ . The texture in both is very fine and close, and the eggs are very strong for their size. My first clutch was taken in May 1902, and my second in May 1904. Dr. Coltart has eggs taken in April and June.

#### 92. STAPHIDIA STRIATA.

F. B. Ind. i. p. 206; Bingham, Ibis, 1903, pp. 590-1.

The breeding of this bird has already been noted in 'The Ibis' (*loc. cit.*), but I reproduce it to make this article more complete:—

"Nest of moss lined with fibres on road-cutting near Byinkyi, 5500 feet. The eggs are broad ovals, white with a faint wash of blue, spotted thickly at the broad end, where the markings are more or less confluent, with brown and purple."

#### 93. PTERUTHIUS XANTHOCHLORIS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 227; Osmaston, B. N. H. S. J. xi. p. 65.

Mr. B. B. Osmaston was the first collector to obtain the

eggs of this species. He writes:—"On April 14th I found a nest of this bird containing two fresh eggs. It was at an elevation of about 8000 feet, in mixed spruce and deodar forest, and was suspended, like that of an Oriole or White-eye, from the slender, horizontal, forked twig of a deodar sapling, about 7 feet from the ground. It was in shape a deep cup, very thin and delicate, but neatly put together.

"The groundwork of the nest consisted of root-fibres and a grey hair-like tree-lichen (*Usnea* sp.), decorated on the outside with ordinary grey leaf-lichens, the whole structure being bound together with silky spider cocoons and threads. The deep cavity was lined with fine, black, hair-like fibres (the rhizomorph of a fungus), and the nest attached to the twigs by the red egg-cocoons of a spider. The two eggs were long ovals, white, spotted rather sparingly and chiefly at the larger end with dark bay spots and specks. They measured .75'' by .54'' and .74'' by .52'' respectively.

"Two appears to be the full complement of eggs for this species, as I waited two days after finding the nest, but no more eggs were laid."

The nest described agrees exactly with one sent me from Sikhim, but the eggs are doubtful, and I do not describe them.

It is probable that the full complement will be found to be four or even five, as in the bird's nearest relative, *Pteruthius melanotis*.

#### 94. *ÆGITHINA NIGRILUTEA*.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 222; Serter, B. N. H. S. J. x. p. 695.

Captain Serter, in an article on Marshall's Iora, thus records its breeding in Cutch, where he states that it is plentiful:—

"The eggs average 0.68'' by 0.54'', and are white in colour with long streaks of lavender-grey and brown, forming a broad zone round many eggs. The nest is usually placed in a mimosa of sorts. . . . The nest is a shallow cup, rather broad for its depth, very neatly made of fibre, with a few hairs inside and cobwebs outside. It somewhat

resembles a Minivet's nest, but is broader and less ornate, though equally hard to find. Occasionally, though rarely, the nest is built in the forked twig of a 'pipul' (*Ficus religiosa*), but I have only obtained one thus placed, which I feel sure was that of a pair which I had previously robbed in a *Mimosa* tree close by."

A pair of eggs in my collection, taken by Mr. Kemp, are exactly like those of the Common Iora. They are the only specimens that I have seen, but others have been taken by two or three collectors, all of whom describe the nest and eggs as being similar to those of *Ægithina typhia*.

95. CEPHALOPYRUS FLAMMICEPS.

Blanford, F. B. Ind. i. p. 247.

The eggs of this little bird have now often been taken and are well known. In colour they are pure unspotted blue and very like those of *Zosterops* (White-eye), but decidedly darker, while they are narrower ovals. The nest is placed in a tiny hole of some tree, and Dr. Coltart has found it in a dead bamboo.

[To be continued.]

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VI.—*On a small Collection of Birds from the Vicinity of Lake Menzalah, in the Delta of Egypt.* By W. L. S. LOAT, F.Z.S.

DURING the spring of 1903 I spent a couple of months in collecting birds at the north-west corner of Lake Menzalah, staying at a small fishing-village called Sheik Shuttah, about five miles from Damietta.

Lake Menzalah, the largest of the four great lakes of Lower Egypt, is situated in the extreme north-east corner of the Delta and close to Port Said. The water is for the most part brackish, except at those points where fresh water enters the lake, chiefly during the rise of the Nile. The land in the vicinity of the village varies a good deal in character. The shore of the Lake is flat and more or less